



Media Release

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Drone specialist urges rural women to get on board with tech

Rural women could be missing out on the opportunity to get on board with ag tech, according to well-known agricultural photographer and drone specialist Fiona Lake.

For 30 years Fiona's iconic images of rural Australia were created with aerial photography from helicopters.

After buying a drone in 2016, Fiona discovered a greater sense of freedom and invested heavily in self-education and training, travelling overseas to learn more.

She is now one of the few Australian women who are fully-licensed by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), which regulates the safety of Australian aircraft, including drones.

"I was surprised to learn there were 1300 men licensed as drone pilots, but only 14 other women," she said. "Australia has more women qualified to shear sheep. This matters because drones are a recognised stepping stone into STEM careers and the uptake of other ag tech which is going to be important for sustainable farming. Ag tech is primarily designed by men, for men to use, and marketed to men. But as rural financial planners will tell you, on many – if not most – farms, it's women who handle the finances and purchasing decisions. There are so many ways they can use drones on the farm and off to create a business servicing rural and regional areas."

Earlier this year Fiona was one of 10 winners of the global Women to Watch in UAS (drones) award. She also was a Queensland finalist in the AgriFutures Rural Women's Award.

Fiona runs workshops designed to pass on her knowledge and experience to people who are interested in flying drones, whether it's for recreational or business use.

She has delivered the workshops in Queensland and Victoria for agricultural industry organisations, local government and rural women's groups.

The next workshop will be a great value full-day session in Townsville on Saturday, November 10.

"This is the practical, experience-based information I wish I'd had access to in Australia when I was new to drones," Fiona said. "Because reliable information can be hard to find, I sort fact from fiction, so drone users can confidently get started or progress."

Fiona will cover a range of topics, including how to choose a drone and accessories, legal and safety information, trouble-shooting, current and future business opportunities, plus what every parent of a student drone pilot needs to know.

Rapid evolution in the drone industry has resulted in a wide range of consumer-friendly drones. These start at small drones weighing less than 100g and priced under \$200, which are ideal for students learning to code. There are also sophisticated quadcopters costing about \$2500 that are capable of quality photography, crop monitoring, infrastructure inspection and sophisticated mapping.

Bookings via [Eventbrite](#) close on November 3.

For more information, go to www.fionalake.com.au or call Fiona on [REDACTED].

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